

# NATIONAL CANNERS ASSOCIATION



## Information Letter



FOR N. C. A. MEMBERS

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### Census Bureau Will Collect Statistics of Stocks of Corn, Peas and Tomatoes

The Census Bureau has agreed to undertake the collection of statistics on stocks of canned corn, peas and tomatoes in the hands of canners, wholesale distributors and chain store grocers as of June 30 and December 31 each year. The first canvass will be made in January, 1928, and will call for data on stocks at the close of the present year.

The dates selected coincide with the times at which both canners and distributors usually take their inventories, and for this reason, it is believed, will entail little additional work.

Canners have expressed their willingness to supply information on their stocks if similar information were furnished by distributors so that a complete picture of conditions would be revealed by the statistics when published. Now that wholesale distributors and chain store grocers have given their approval to the plan to collect the figures, the Census Bureau has agreed to make the initial canvass.

Canners may furnish the data called for by the Census Bureau with full assurance that in no case will the Bureau disclose figures on individual firms. The value of the figures will depend in part on their prompt collection and compilation, and this in turn will depend entirely on the promptness with which the Bureau's schedules are returned by the canners and others asked to make reports.

### New German Labeling Regulations

Under the authority of the German food law of July 5, 1927, a decree has been issued governing the marking of food-

stuffs, whether of domestic production or imported from abroad, when distributed to consumers in packages or containers. The effective date of the regulations is October 1, 1927, but they will not be applied to foodstuffs imported from abroad until April 1, 1928.

The decree was passed without hearing special representatives of the German importing trade, and the U. S. Department of Commerce has been advised by cable that the Federal German Government has agreed to hear such representatives in order to determine the changes which probably will be necessary in some points. These hearings will take place in December, the date to be fixed later. In the meantime American exporters may submit their representations in writing to the Reichsministerium Fuer Ernaehrung und Landwirtschaft, Berlin, either through the Division of Foreign Tariffs, Department of Commerce, Washington, or preferably through the exporters' German representatives, also petitioning that their representatives be admitted to the hearings.

*Paragraph 1* of the decree enumerates eighteen classes of foodstuffs that must bear the prescribed markings, and among these are: Preserves of meat or meat substitutes in hermetically sealed containers; preserves of fish, including marinades; preserves of shellfish; milk and cream preserves; vegetable preserves; fruit preserves, including fruit must, fruit jam, marmalade, fruit juice, fruit jelly, and fruit syrup; meat extract and its substitutes, meat broth cubes and their substitutes; soup in dried form; lobster extract and crab extract.

*Paragraph 2* of the decree states that on the packages or containers must be shown, *in the German language* and readily legible:

1. Name of the individual or firm and the locality of the main establishment of the producer of the foodstuffs; if, however, the foodstuff is produced in Germany, although the main establishment of the producer is located in a foreign country, the place of production in Germany must also be stated. Foodstuffs in packages or containers brought into trade by other than the producer must carry the other's individual or firm name instead of the producer's.

2. The contents, according to designations used in trade, and the German measurement or weight (in accordance with the measurement and weight regulations) at the time of packing, or the number of pieces, observing also certain special regulations, which, as to canned foods, require:

(a) On preserves of meat or of meat substitutes in hermetically sealed containers, the weight of the boned meat (including fat) or bacon; the weight of the bones in ribs, pig feet and preserves of poultry may be included in the stated weight;

(b) On fish preserves, including marinated fish, the weight of the prepared fish or fish parts; in addition, the date of packing by month and year, except for products preserved by heating;

(c) On condensed milk, the content of fat and fat-free solids in percentages of the weight; on cream preserves, the content of fat in percentages of the weight; on milk powder, the date of production, giving month and year;

(d) On containers (other than standard tins such as prescribed in paragraph 3 of this decree) of vegetable preserves and fruit preserves, with the exception of fruit must, fruit jam, marmalades, fruit juice, fruit jelly, fruit syrup, the weight of the vegetables or fruits, without the added fluid.

*Paragraph 3* of the decree defines the standard container noted above. By 1/1 standard container is meant a container which, measured in an unsealed condition, has a volume of 900 cubic centimeters for vegetable preserves, and 850 cubic centimeters for fruit preserves. Besides the 1/1 standard tin, there will be permitted  $\frac{1}{8}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $1\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , and  $5\frac{1}{2}$  standard tins. The permitted standard sizes must be indicated on the tins. They must be packed according to commercial usage and shall not contain more fluids than is technically unavoidable.

*Paragraph 4* states that foodstuffs imported from foreign countries are subject to the regulations, and *Paragraph 5* fixes the date on which the decree becomes effective.

In explanation of various features of the decree, the U. S. Department of Commerce states:

The German competent authorities did not establish exact definitions with regard to the words "packages" or "containers" as applied throughout the regulations. They claimed that difficulties in the interpretation of these terms have not as yet arisen, but it should be mentioned that ordinary packings of paper, for instance, paper bags, etc., will not be considered as "packages" in the meaning of the regulations.

It was found expedient to insert in paragraph 2, No. 1, the regulation that, if the foodstuff is produced in Germany, although the main establishment of the producer is located in a foreign country, the place of production in Germany must also be stated in order to make a distinction between German products and foreign products.

Special attention should be paid by exporters to the regulations as prescribed in paragraph 2, No. 2 relating to measurements or weights.

Metric weights and measures (cubic centimeters, liters, grams, kilograms, etc.) are required for labeling purposes. Statements in pounds, pints, or quarts, etc., are not permissible. It is also required to state the accurate weight. Approximate indications such as "about," or "approximately," are not permitted.

The word weight in the regulations should mean the maximum weight. Goods which suffer a certain shrinkage in weight during storage should especially be considered.

Paragraph 2 requires the statement of weight of the prepared fish. This protection was granted to the consumer on the basis of domestic experience. For fish preserves not preserved by heating, it was considered advisable, for reasons of health protection, to require the month and year of the packing.

Vegetable and fruit preserves with the exceptions mentioned in the decree (paragraph 2, No. 2d) require a statement of weight without the added fluid. However, exceptions will be made for cases in which standard tins are used. The admission of such standard tins has been desired by the domestic preserving concerns for some time. This was considered reasonable, as only those tins are regarded as complying with the regulations as provided in paragraph 3.

The designation 1/1 means a full size standard tin, and all other tins mentioned are based upon this measurement. The designation 2/1 means a double size standard tin (1,800 cubic centimeters for vegetable preserves and 1,700 cubic centimeters for fruit preserves); 5/1 means a tin with a capacity five times as much as a full size standard tin (4,500 cubic centimeters for vegetable preserves, 4,250 cubic centimeters for fruit preserves). The designations  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ , etc., represent one-half, one-quarter, etc., of the standard size.

Since the pure food law of July 5, 1927, stipulates various penalties, including both fines and imprisonment, for infractions of the different regulations, a special provision was not included with regard to the penalties in this decree.

The size of can used in the United States that is nearest the standard size set by the new German regulations is the No. 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ , which has a capacity of approximately 865 cubic centimeters. Capacities of other sizes commonly used in this country are approximately as follows: No. 1, 320 c.c.; No. 2, 605 c.c.; No. 3, 1,020 c.c.; No. 5, 1,690 c.c.; No. 10, 3,125 c.c.

#### Army to Buy Canned Foods

The Quartermaster Supply office, First Avenue and 58th Street, Brooklyn, is advertising for bids on various foods, to be opened on November 17. Among the articles included in the announcement are canned salmon, apricots, asparagus, apples, string beans, catsup, cherries, corn, mushrooms, oysters, peaches, pears, peas, pineapple, preserves of various kinds, pumpkin, sardines, sausage, shrimp, soup, and spinach.

Ordinarily the time between the advertisement of such bids, and the date on which the bids are to be opened, is short, and canners who desire to submit bids should arrange to have their names placed on the mailing list of the Quartermaster Supply Office, so that they may receive the advertisements direct.

### Imports of Canned Tomatoes and Tomato Paste

Figures announced by the Department of Commerce show a striking increase in the imports of canned tomatoes in September as compared with the same month in the two previous years. There was a decline, however, in the imports of tomato paste. The figures for the September imports during the last three years follow:

| Canned tomatoes:      | Pounds     | Value     |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|
| September, 1925 ..... | 7,980,042  | \$347,048 |
| September, 1926 ..... | 7,616,844  | 350,300   |
| September, 1927 ..... | 12,769,133 | 730,612   |
| Tomato paste:         |            |           |
| September, 1925 ..... | 1,404,057  | 104,454   |
| September, 1926 ..... | 1,828,231  | 178,625   |
| September, 1927 ..... | 1,229,364  | 121,868   |

### Decrease Anticipated in Mexican West Coast Vegetable Production

Acreage devoted to fresh vegetables on the Mexican West Coast in the 1927-28 season will be considerably less than in 1926-27, according to reports received by the U. S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics from the American consulates at Mazatlan, Guaymas and Nogales. A survey made by the Southern Pacific Railway of Mexico reported the acreage in 1926-27 as 59,194 acres, and present estimates indicate that only 36,000 acres will be planted in the 1927-28 season. Reduction in the acreage is attributed to two factors—plant diseases and insect pests and a lack of funds to finance the new season's crop.

The consul at Mazatlan reports that practically the entire tomato acreage of the Mexican West Coast has gradually become infested by nailhead, aphid and "bofo" (puffy fruit). It is estimated that in some districts from 70 to 80 per cent of the tomato crop was unfit for shipping during December and January. The late crop, harvested in February and March, was in fairly good condition, but the Florida crop came in at the same time and the competition caused severe losses to the Mexican growers, one of the largest firms being forced to withdraw entirely from the business and the other to reorganize its finances. As these two firms financed most of the smaller growers, the 1927-28 acreage had to be reduced.

Mexican West Coast tomatoes are shipped into the United States throughout the entire season. Peas, peppers and lettuce come in principally during the months November to January. The shipping and marketing of the crops are largely in the hands of Americans who maintain headquarters at Nogales. Too many firms are now engaged in the distribution end of the business, according to the American consul at Nogales, with a resultant lack of organization and orderly marketing.

Tomatoes are by far the most important of all the perishables shipped to the Northern markets, contributing about 75 per cent of the total West Coast exports of winter fruits and vegetables.

Estimates by the Traffic Department of the Southern Pacific Railroad of Mexico placed anticipated exports of fruits and vegetables for the 1926-27 season at 9,400 carloads, as compared with 4,434 carloads the preceding season. Total shipments in 1926-27, however, actually amounted to 6,289 carloads. Although shipments were considerably less than expected, they showed an increase of 42 per cent over the preceding year.

The following table, compiled from records of the Southern Pacific Railroad, shows the exports of fruits and vegetables to the United States from the Mexican West Coast during the last seven seasons:

| Season        | Total<br>Carloads | Tomatoes<br>Carloads | Green peas<br>Carloads | All others<br>Carloads |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1920-21 ..... | 1,009             | 900                  | —                      | 109                    |
| 1921-22 ..... | 1,398             | 1,141                | —                      | 255                    |
| 1922-23 ..... | 2,195             | 1,724                | 72                     | 399                    |
| 1923-24 ..... | 2,700             | 2,058                | 88                     | 554                    |
| 1924-25 ..... | 3,500             | 2,647                | 201                    | 652                    |
| 1925-26 ..... | 4,434             | 3,025                | 656                    | 753                    |
| 1926-27 ..... | 6,289             | 4,636                | 928                    | 725                    |

The foregoing shows that during the 1926-27 season tomatoes constituted 74 per cent of the total shipments and green peas 15 per cent, while all other fruits and vegetables were only 11 per cent of the total.

#### Cuban Importers Anticipate Tariff Increases

In anticipation of the new Cuban tariff, which became effective on October 26 and which increased the duties on canned foods, Cuban importers made larger purchases of canned fruit and vegetables in August, according to the American consul general at Havana. Imports of canned fruits in August totaled 3,808 cases, as against 2,433 cases in July. Imports of canned fruits amounted to 26,712 cases as compared with 9,610 cases in July.



### State Cannery Association Convention Dates

The annual meeting of the Tri-State Packers Association will be held at Philadelphia on December 15 and 16. The convention of the Minnesota Cannery Association has been set for December 16 and 17. The Cannery League of California, it is announced, will hold its meeting at Del Monte, February 22-25.

### A Suggestion to Exporters to Europe

From a French firm has come a suggestion that will be of interest to all canners whose products enter foreign trade. In a letter to an American correspondent, the French firm states:

"We still see that American, as well as Canadian packers, in many cases omit to emboss the lids of their tins with the country of origin. It would be far better if they embossed all tins coming to Europe, and so not confine the sale to certain countries only which have no restrictions. The value of the goods is enhanced by the fact that they can be transferred to any country when desired."

### Car Loadings Decline

Loadings of revenue freight for the week ended October 29 totaled 1,112,621 cars, according to the American Railway Association, this being a decrease of 15,865 cars below the preceding week this year and a decrease of 96,257 cars under the same week last year.

### Smaller Pack of Cherries in Brine in Italy

The Italian pack of cherries in brine this season is much less than in 1926, it is stated in a cablegram from the U. S. trade commissioner at Rome. The total pack this year is about 8,818,000 pounds. The cherry crop was about 80 per cent of normal, and the decline of the pack in brine is ascribed to the heavy stocks carried over from last year and the short crop season. Italian exports of cherries in brine to the United States in 1926 are reported as 3,746,277 pounds.

### Japanese Cannery to Increase Output

A fish-canning business undertaken in 1926 by a Japanese firm at Nagasaki has proved more successful than anticipated, according to the American consul in that city, and it is planned to enlarge operations and undertake an output of 50,000 cases next year. The fish are labeled as "sardines," but they are not the clupeoid fishes which under American regulations may be labeled "sardines." The pack is put up in tomato sauce com-

bined with a light vegetable oil, in oval cans measuring  $6\frac{1}{4}$  x  $4\frac{1}{4}$  x  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Most of the pack is shipped to the South Pacific, Southern Asia, Hongkong and Tientsin.

#### **Canned Meat for the French Army**

By a decree dated October 5, 1927, and published in the Journal Official of October 14, 1927, the provisions of the Act of January 11, 1896, stipulating that the supply of canned meat required by the French Army was to be exclusively purchased in France or in its colonies or protectorates, and was to be manufactured under the control of the Government or in Government plants from native cattle, have been authorized to be derogated for the years 1928 and 1929, according to a report of October 15, from the American consul general at Paris.

#### **Service to Membership in Consumer Complaint Cases**

In view of inquiries with respect to the nature of the service that the National Canners Association is prepared to render to its members in connection with unjustified claims of illness or injury attributed to their products, it seems desirable to state again that the Association will not only investigate all such claims where products of its members are involved, but will also provide legal assistance and, upon approval by the Association's general counsel, will employ competent attorneys to defend such claims in case suit is brought. It is to be understood, however, that if the Association undertakes the defense of such a suit, the canner on whose behalf the defense is undertaken must assume responsibility for any judgment or damages which may be awarded as the outcome of the suit.

In addition to this legal service, the Association will also be glad to assist in the defense of such claims by having its scientific staff examine samples secured in connection with the investigation, and if necessary testify as expert witnesses in the trial of the suit, if counsel feels that their services are needed.

#### **Egypt's Purchases of Canned Fruits**

The United States furnished approximately 37 per cent of the total imports of canned and bottled fruits into Egypt in 1926, according to the American consul at Cairo. The total imports amounted to 1,764,015 pounds valued at \$177,160, of which the United States furnished 560,727 pounds valued at \$68,145. The Straits Settlements ranked first, supplying 680,454 pounds valued at \$40,480. The United States was second, and Italy ranked third with 234,605 pounds valued at \$26,114.